



THE TRADES AND PROFESSIONS ALIKE HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE INDUSTRIAL SUPPLEMENT.

MONUMENTAL FIGURES.

WHOLESALE DRY GOODS INTEREST
MARKS THE CLIMAX IN GREATER
NEW-YORK CITY'S COMMERCIAL
AND INDUSTRIAL WELFARE—
\$40,000,000,000 ANNUALLY.EVERY DEPARTMENT SHOWS A TOWERING PRE-
MINENCE OVER ALL OTHER AMERICAN
TRADE CENTRES, TAKEN IN COMBINA-
TION—STATISTICS THAT RAFFLE
COMPREHENSION—MANU-
FACTURE AND IMPORTS
CONTROLLED IN
NEW-YORK.

Greater New-York, the office and warehouse of America, the Bagdad of the West! Here trade centers and radiates, and here the most continuous clink of money is heard this side of London, the bank of the world. Acrobats in figures aver that the gross sum of the city's trade is forty thousand millions a year, and that the total transactions of forty-seven other cities of the country is twenty thousand millions. Perhaps this achievement in ciphering produces nothing but a blur on the consciousness of the layman, and perhaps the statement isn't true. But whether the aggregate trade is forty or four billions, the result of comparisons is that New-York, as the handler and distributor of what is produced in America and of that which is brought here from other continents, stands as two out of three. New-York is two integers, each of the other trade centers of the country, including Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, St. Louis, Cincinnati, San Francisco and thirty-nine other cities that have more than 20,000 population each, are fractions of one integer. Indeed, New-York is so inter-related with every part of the country and with the exchanges and manufactures of every sub-center that to separate their trade from the trade of New-York is like taking a part from the whole. To the extent that they gather the products of their contributory territories and distribute them again within their territories they are independent of the greater city. If they wish to send anything abroad, or if they wish to market a product in all other parts of the country, they do two-thirds or three-fourths of it by way of New-York.

Consider in some detail the dry goods trade of America, and see how four-fifths of all the prints, woollens, silks, linens and fancy fabrics, made or imported into the United States, are sold in New-York. This is the primary American market for textiles of all kinds. Those who buy elsewhere seldom buy at first hands. The majority of the great textile producers do not sell a dollar's worth of their product directly. They have no selling department, no mercantile organization. They reach the public solely through the great New-York houses, that handle in bulk the product of many mills, and these great houses are to all intents first hands, and in their relations to the public are equivalent to producers. Those who buy in New-York buy from these houses, the primary sources of supply. Those who buy elsewhere, as a general thing, buy from the customers of these houses.

Works engaged in cotton manufactures according to the census of 1890 numbered 1,000. The capital invested was \$254,020,843. They operated 14,088,163 spindles and 324,896 looms, yielding a product yearly of \$267,981,724. In woollen manufactures there were 2,480 establishments, with \$296,494,481 capital, operating 3,286,280 spindles and turning out an annual product of \$307,768,824. The combined value of the two textile industries was \$565,750,548. New-York's contribution to these totals was trifling, as only one concern of importance in these lines, a carpet factory, exists in New-York.

Yet 75 per cent of these products were distributed by agencies within the limits of Worth, Leonard, Thomas and Franklin sts. The powers there control 50 per cent of the mill productive forces of the country. "The Dry Goods Chronicle," in commenting on this fact, said:

"It is not claimed that of the capital invested in textile manufacturing 50 per cent is held in New-York, but a much more important claim

would probably show that the present indebtedness of the manufacturing interests to the selling houses of New-York for advances is not far short of one-half of their capitalization. The importance of a market holding such a power as this, to say nothing of its stock-holding interests, cannot be overestimated. It makes the New-York merchants paramount in the disposition of merchandise, and as they are always working under the incentive to realize against their advances selling houses are always affording buyers such opportunities as other cities have not the power to afford."

There are some textile products which are almost entirely sold by New-York houses to the exclusion of other cities or direct business by the mills. This is particularly the case with printed cotton goods. Probably not more than 1 per cent of the printed cotton fabrics used in this country reaches the consumer without having first been put upon the market in New-York. In dress goods of the gingham sort the percentage is not much larger.

Single commission houses in New-York make yearly sales of \$20,000,000. One such house controls 50 per cent of the weaving of cotton goods in the State of Maine and important mills in Massachusetts. The one house keeps going

yards of intricate carpeting a day. But Philadelphia sends her carpets to New-York to find buyers.

New-York sells fourteen-fifteenths of the silk used in America, the domestic product of which is estimated by Briton Richardson, secretary of the Silk Association of America, at \$100,000,000 in value. Charles F. Homer, writing in "The Dry Goods Economist," says that the United States is second only to France in the quality of the silk goods produced. Paterson, N. J., the Lyons of America, sells her gross product in New-York, and so do the silk mills of Philadelphia, Easton, Allentown, Mauch Chunk, Wilkesbarre, Reading and Harrisburg, in the Pennsylvania coal country.

The purpose of some manufacturers in locating in a coal-producing country is in finding there the kind of labor they use. The labor required in silk mills is of the lightest sort for the most part, and girls, women and boys are most suited to many of its requirements.

In the coal regions, where the rough work of mining precludes the women and girls from gaining their livelihood as the men do, the silk mill gives them the desired opportunity.

The making of thread constitutes a great industry. The cotton, linen and silk thread fac-

of the large houses in other cities are sure outlets. Conditions limit them.

One New-York house this year has bought in a bunch \$50,000 worth of silk handkerchiefs of one kind. Another house took \$200,000 worth of gingham in one day, at auction. The same house the next day took the entire product of another mill. "The Dry Goods Chronicle," in commenting on this class of facts, says:

"After a couple of weeks letter-writing to distant firms, the importer or manufacturer who wants to make a quick turn finds he has sold little jags of his best goods to a dozen different houses, hasn't got his cash, and has about half his goods still on his hands. He wisely concludes that the next time he will make a bigger discount and sell the lot in a lump in New-York."

The reason why New-York jobbers are bolder, stronger, quicker buyers at the sources of supply than those of other cities is not that they more nerve or more money than their competitors, but because they have a far larger outlet. New-York jobbers can realize quickly. Within a 100-mile radius are 10,000,000 of people, and, beyond, the continent. Dependent on the New-York market as a source of supply, the Western jobbers know that in a policy requiring constant large purchases at low prices, for cash, they cannot compete on even terms with New-York.

New-York jobbers trade on narrow margins, because such a policy gives immediate outlet to immense quantities of goods that would not otherwise move.

There are no limits but those of the continent to New-York's dry goods trade. Drawing customers from a limited territory, the wholesale merchants of other cities can buy only what the tastes of the people of those territories approve. New-York houses can buy anything that any section of the country can use, because all sections are New-York's customers. It is for this reason that New-York jobbers command the sources of production and market the product of 1,000 mills in bulk.

New-York has its great general houses, and those in less degree other cities have, too. But New-York has its specialists by the thousand, and these specialists other cities have not. One of these great special houses, the largest in New-York, a dealer in rugs and Oriental novelties, carries \$2,000,000 in stock, as many as 20,000 cases of full packages at a time. These houses have agents all over the world, and is without a rival in London, Paris or Vienna.

These specialists have to do with the dry goods manufacture of New-York. This is the most important manufacturing city in America, a fact that is not often considered in thinking of the commerce of the great city. Philadelphia is thought of as a city of artisans, New-York as the chief worker in iron, Chicago as the manufacturer of food products. Who ever thinks of New-York as a manufacturing city?

New-York has no great iron industry, no great wooden and cotton factories, no immense packing-houses, but its annual manufactures are valued according to the census at \$775,000,000. This is \$113,000,000 more than Chicago's annual manufactures, \$200,000,000 more than Philadelphia, and three times as much as Boston or St. Louis.

There are probably 2,000 firms in the city who produce or distribute dry goods specialties, novelties, fancy goods and articles de Paris.

To compare the importing commission dry goods interest with that of any other city is not possible, because no other city has any to speak of. New-York is the channel through which foreign goods flow into the United States. In none of the cities of the world can houses similar to New-York's commission importing houses be found except in Buenos Ayres, Rio Janeiro, Hong Kong and Tokio, where a few houses have a limited field of action.

In Europe the English and continental manufacturers seek their home trade direct. To do so in this country would result in an added expense that would make the goods unsaleable in competition with domestic-made goods or prohibitive to the consumer. To reach the market without direct canvassing, the important manufacturers have established agencies in New-York. The concentration of these agencies in individual hands has built up the great importing commission houses.

These houses buy no goods. They represent the manufacturers, and to all intents, so far as the buyers are concerned, are the manufacturers. In dealing with them buyers deal with first hands. These houses though they do not buy goods, make large advances on consignment, and require large capital. They guarantee the manufacturers against bad debts. Domestic manufacturers have placed business in the hands of these houses to the extent of \$80,000,000 a year. The dry goods imports of New-York for the year that has just ended, according to the Treasury report, were \$2,282,514. The sum, with the duties, makes an aggregate of at least \$25,000,000 for 1896 in the foreign dry goods importing business.

Take for example the French textiles. Where can an American get the ribbons of St. Chamond, the knit goods of Troyes, the cottons of Lille, the fair-like laces of Caudebec and Calais, the gloves of Grenoble, and the woollens of St. Germain, Switzerland, and particularly of England, Austria and Belgium.

Besides the department houses that carry stock of which there are twenty or thirty in the city, there are several hundred foreign specialty houses which confine themselves to one or two lines of goods. The class of goods handled by these concerns includes the entire range of dry goods, production from a button to a finished costume.

The following table, showing the value of imports of textiles into New-York from 1879 to 1896 inclusive, shows how dependent on for-

What amount of capital moved this enormous business? Nobody knows. A capital of a credit of probably a \$1,000,000,000. These colossal facts are only a part of the sum of New-York commercial supremacy.

How many persons does this enormous dry goods business engage? Nobody knows accurately, but it is estimated that 50,000 clerks, salesmen, bookkeepers, porters and teamsters are in it.

CLOTHING MANUFACTURES.

In any consideration of the conditions affecting the clothing trade, it is necessary to take into account some of the phases that are usually little thought of by the general public. Among these phases is the constant changing of fashions. New stocks must be manufactured, not only for each year's trade, but for the trade of each season.

During the last few years the character of the

York is the centre, by the way—amounts to a little less than the enormous sum of \$300,000,000. The trade furnishes employment to over 150,000 people in Greater New-York.

The gentleman alluded to places the number of failures in the city at about fifteen or twenty, and he regards the unsuitable and unseasonable weather of the present year as the chief factor that has caused the disasters. He believes that politics have had nothing to do with the failures, which have all been small, and it is the small manufacturers who are the calamity howlers. They have very little money at their disposal, and there seems to be a prevailing impression among them that the season is going to open very late, and very few are willing to take any chances, fearing that what little judgment they have might prove unreliable. The hesitancy that they show in purchasing or manufacturing



IRVING SAVINGS BANK BUILDING.

800,000 of the 14,000,000 spindles in the country. Another firm finances mills with 16,000 looms and 500,000 spindles in them. The mills produce all classes of cotton goods from coarse brown to fine-colored fabrics.

What has been said in respect to the controlling power of New-York houses over the cotton interests of the country is as true of the woollen manufactures. Probably in the matter of advances, the command is greater. The making of woollen goods is more frequently undertaken by small concerns and small capitalists than the manufacture of cotton goods, and the necessity of an agent wealthy enough to carry stocks in the course of distribution is greater in consequence.

New-York distributes 75 per cent of these stocks, and bears the burden between the time of production—sometimes earlier—and the payment of accounts by buyers. In every branch of the woollen trade New-York money oils the machinery and New-York sells the product. So it comes about that the New-York dry goods trade is so enormous. It is the primary market for Fall River and Drelot County, Mass.,

teries have a capital of \$27,000,000. They give employment to 32,000 workers. Alfred R. Turner, Jr., vice-president of Barbour Bros' Company, Paterson, N. J., estimates in "The Dry Goods Economist" that the yearly product of this product is marked by the wholesalers of New-York. This is the primary market.

The analysis of the wholesale dry goods trade of New-York might be carried into fifty other minor departments; shawls, lace curtains, knit goods, underwear, gloves, hats and caps, etc., with the same results. That is, from two-thirds to nine-tenths of the gross product of the United States is sold in New-York, that buyers elsewhere in America buy for the most part of second hands.

From New-York to St. Paul, to Galveston, to Spokane Falls, is a long distance—1,500 miles, 1,800 miles, 2,500 miles. For merchants to come to New-York means long journeys, detachment from business, days and weeks of hotel bills in the highest priced places in the United States. In every important city are wholesalers who are contending for the trade of their tributary territory, and some of these wholesalers search for buyers over all America. Retailers of the slope west of the Rockies are canvassed by Portland and San Francisco. The eastern slope is covered by the salesmen of Denver and Omaha, the middle distance by Kansas City, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Detroit and Milwaukee, while St. Louis, Chicago and Cincinnati reach out for trade far South and far to the West.

Yet the great jobbing and specialty houses of New-York sell as much dry goods, twice as much, as the jobbers of all these cities and all other jobbers in the United States combined. Some of the goods are sold twice or three times at wholesale, but New-York sells it first. And this, as has been indicated, is because New-York is the great depot and central distributing point of American textile interests. The New-York jobbers are in closest contact with the sources of supply, and because of that they have opportunities that are in part denied to the wholesalers in other cities. The reason buyers make expensive trips from every where in the United States to New-York is because it pays them to come. They can buy more cheaply here, or, if they stay at home, more cheaply of the traveling agent of the New-York houses.

First choice, nearness to the source of supply, means often the chance to buy at less than their value the stocks of manufacturers or importers who want to turn them at once into cash. Every such manufacturer knows that he can go to any one of a dozen houses and get a check for \$100,000, \$50,000, or \$100,000. If he is in need of money, if he is overstocked, if instant need is backward, if he thinks that styles will change and his stock depreciate, the manufacturer seeks a cash buyer in one of the big houses. He wants to make a quick turn. Cash in New-York means cash. Elsewhere cash is from ten to thirty days. More than that, none

anything is embarrassing to themselves and the trade generally.

Another gentleman attributes the cheapness of clothing to the poor condition of trade during the last twelve months, to the unloading of stock left over from last season at whatever price it would bring on the market, but chiefly to the admission into this country of free wool.

All the members of the oldest established clothing firm in the city stoutly declared that the outlook for a first-class season was never better, and that all their salesmen on the road are sending in good reports and numerous large orders. One salesman who has been in the employ of the house for the last fifteen years, sent in his largest order during all that period yesterday. They said also that everything indicates the return of prosperity throughout the country. They have every reason to believe that about \$125,000,000 worth of trade will be the amount of business accomplished by the clothing manufacturers throughout the country this spring, and about the same amount in the fall.

Some six or seven other very well-known Broadway manufacturers all gave satisfactory reports, and appear to have bright hopes for the future. They believe that the darkest days of the trade are about over, and they can see naught but brightness in view.

The publisher of a periodical devoted to the interest of the trade could see nothing but dark clouds ahead. When informed what glowing reports the manufacturers had been giving out, he replied: "Oh, yes, they are endeavoring to put on happy faces to keep up courage, and give things a happy outlook, but mark my words, the jig is about up about 35 per cent of the trade in this city. The manufacturers are virtually manufacturing goods to order only, and if they could only keep the game up for a few months they might manage to weather the gale somewhat by wiping out the over-production, which is one of the main causes of the present state of affairs."

"The average manufacturer refuses to be interviewed for the very good reason that he is afraid the true state of his business might leak out and show how very near death he is financially. Trade is in a most deplorable condition in every way. Capital is exhausted, and we have suffered more than any other industry in the United States from over-production and from cheap tailors, who manufacture suits for \$4 or \$5 from goods that cost them 50 cents a yard; but the consumers are reaping the harvest, and are receiving more for their money than they could get in any other part of the world."

The vice-president of the Clothiers' Association states that the trade is doing quite well, and that business will be booming again in another month, and will continue to hold second place among the great industries of this mighty metropolis.

LACE CURTAINS.

Less than a dozen years ago every pair of lace curtains sold in this country was imported from England. To-day there are a dozen mills and 150 lace-making machines in the United States. These machines represent an invested capital of more than \$2,500,000, and turn out at a rough estimate about 3,000,000 pairs of lace curtains annually.

The firms controlling these mills and their enormous products, together with the firms who handle all the lace curtains imported from Europe, have their headquarters in New-York. They have their offices in the very heart of the dry goods district, and their yearly business foots up to millions of dollars.

The introduction of lace-making machines in America, and the natural competition which followed, have worked a revolution in the lace-curtain industry. It has increased the volume of business to an enormous extent, although cutting the standard prices almost in half has made the manufacture of lace curtains more profitable than ever. As a matter of course, the public has reaped its share of the benefit. Twenty years ago curtains, even of the cheapest grades, were expensive. To-day a dollar will buy a pair of curtains that a few years ago would have cost five times that amount. And in the opinion of conservative men, who are in a position to know, the prices will be still lower when certain additions and improvements to the existing plants are perfected. Although the industry naturally suffered during the recent dull times, the heads of the leading lace-curtain houses in this city say that they are more than satisfied with the outlook and anticipate a big revival in the trade during the next month.

"Few people understand the difficulties and risks of manufacturing lace curtains," said the head of one of the leading firms. "Indeed, there are few people who have even the remotest idea of how lace curtains are made. To begin with, the modern curtain-making machine is simply



NEW COLUMBIA COLLEGE LIBRARY ON MORRISIDE HEIGHTS.

to take its own time, and then shoulder all the responsibility concerning tariff legislation. Thus the commercial world will know just where it is going to stand for a year or so at least.

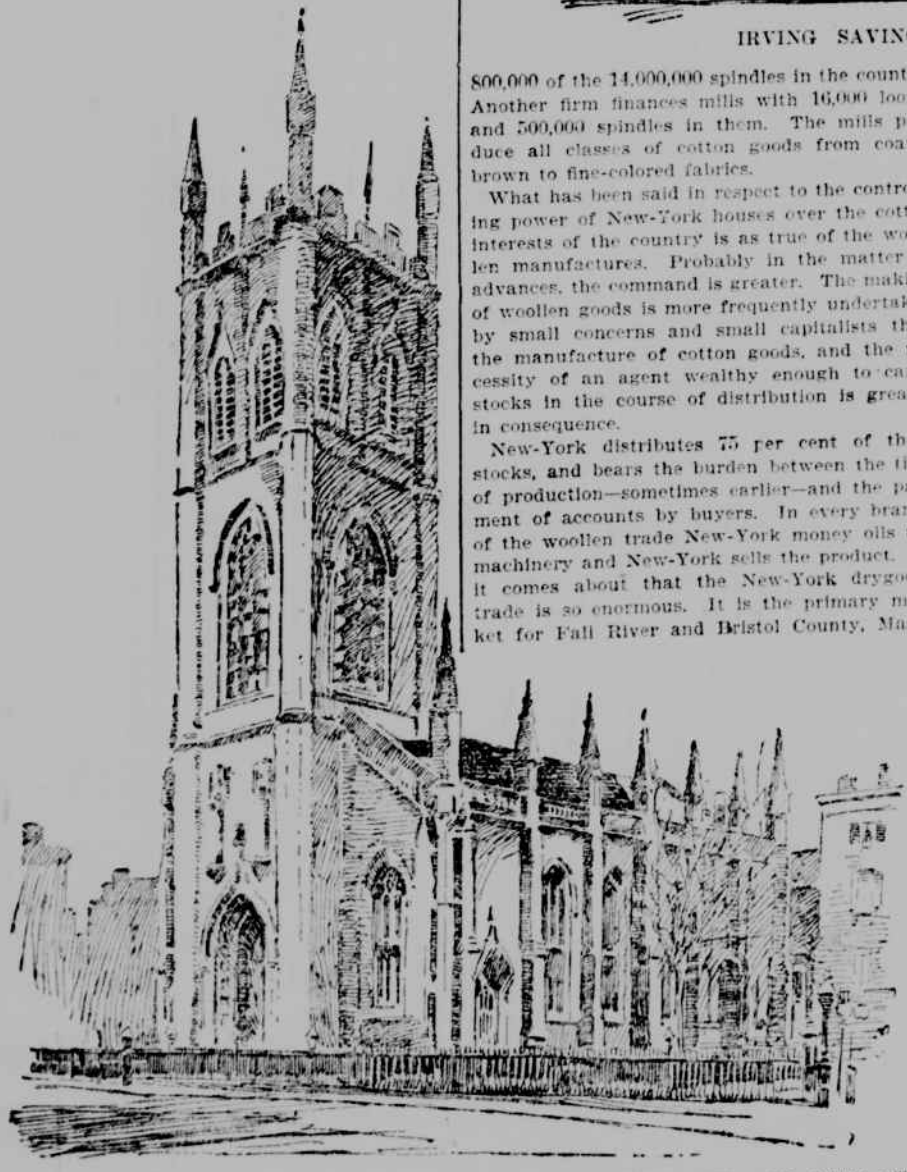
"Stop all this talk of the tariff and of war for the present, and let us get down to work, and hurry up prosperity."

The great majority of clothing manufacturers, however, see a good time coming, and no breakers to speak of ahead.

One manufacturer, who is the senior member of a firm that employs about 3,000 hands, says that while the spring trade cannot be said to have fairly begun, the present indications are that it will be more than good, and may even reach the standard of 1892, which was the most glorious and prosperous year for more than a decade.

Even at the present moment, he claims, prices are fair and remunerative, and he sees no reason why there should be grumbling or complaining. This, he says, is the undivided opinion of the entire trade, with the exception of a handful of old grumblers who are never satisfied with anything.

This same gentleman estimates that the capital invested in the clothing trade in this city alone amounts to much more than \$20,000,000 per annum, that the product amounts to about \$80,000,000, and that the capital invested in the business throughout the country—of which New-



OLD FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 5TH AVE., BETWEEN 11TH AND 12TH STS.

can be made, and that is that the financial aid afforded by the many large commission houses is necessary to the continuous and successful operation of fully that percentage of the industry.

"There are comparatively few manufacturing concerns with surplus capital large enough to enable them to bear the cost of their products between the time they leave the looms and the time they are paid for by the purchaser. The great majority are in need of some agency to carry them over such an interval even in the best of times. In such a year as the country has just passed through they are absolutely dependent for existence upon it. In New-York that agency is found, and hardly anywhere else. If complete figures could be gathered they